

## BEING versus DOING

God said I AM... He did not say I DO...

Of course HE DOES many things; Jesus said that He only worked the works of His Father, and He would only do what He saw His Father do. But all that He does are the result of WHO HE IS! As we are called to be like Him, we also must work the works of our Father on earth, as a result of WHO WE ARE in Him.

It is a trap of the world to think of ourselves in terms of WHAT I DO. The people of the world draw their identity by what they do; "I am what I do" is a subtle principle underlying what people think of themselves in the world.

In Christ, the foundation of WHO I AM comes first. What I do for the Lord is secondary and not as important. We only do what the Lord tells us to do for Him. At the end, we are no more than unprofitable servants, who did what we were supposed to.

The Lord calls some of us to do the work of the evangelist; some to work as pastors; some to work as helpers in the church, some to work a regular job and be used in the marketplace, etc. No matter what we do for the Lord, at the end of the day we all ARE children of God, siblings of Jesus, disciples, servants, etc. No matter the kind of work we do, at the end we shall be rewarded on the basis of having done what was expected of us. He who had to do 1 thing, and he who had to do 10 things, will receive the same reward if they have done what was expected of them.

Perhaps the Lord has called me to work in the capacity of an Apostle, or, Prophet, or, Pastor, for the sake of equipping the saints. But WHO AM I in the Lord? If I think of myself as an Apostle, or Prophet, or Pastor, then I draw my identity from what I do... that is wrong!

I cannot take any credit or pride in what I do for the Lord, by His calling. It makes no difference if I work in church ministry, or, if I work in the marketplace serving the Lord there. Who I am in the Lord is my inner nature as child of God, not what I do in the natural body, which is a service in one form or another, as we are all members of the same Body.

WHO I AM is NOT the result of what I do for the Lord (during this season of my life). I am primarily a disciple of Jesus, who has been called to serve Him and His Body on earth. In what capacity I am called to serve is a secondary matter! Therefore I cannot place the importance of who I am on what I do; when I do that, I fall away from the foundation of my identity in Christ and miss the mark.

It seems that some leaders think of themselves higher than they ought to, because they regard themselves by the work they do, thinking they are special.

That is a terrible trap of the enemy, a temptation of self-exaltation that can destroy people and ministries.

Let us consider the 5 ministries for the equipping of the saints, which Paul listed in Eph.4. Leaving aside the ministry of the evangelist which causes our birth in the Body of Christ, the remaining 4 ministries are valid for all the servants of God who remain disciples of Jesus till the day we leave this earth.

Each disciple/servant needs an Apostle to lead the way; a Prophet who can see farther ahead and discern deeper in the darkness of the spirit realm; a Teacher who can instruct in Christ and keep us growing in the spirit, and, finally... a Pastor who can look after us as sheep of God... and then, all of us need the other sheep around us so that we can be a part of the flock of God.

Our Christ is our Great Shepherd... His nature as Pastor is one of the primary functions that causes His sheep to feel secure and well cared for! All that our Christ is, is also reflected on earth, through His Body; there is always an earthly manifestation of Who Jesus is and what He does because of Who HE IS.

In simple language? We ALL NEED a PASTOR!! We all need to know which flock we belong to... (which also determines who is our Pastor).

Whether we are junior members of the Body of Christ, or, senior servants ministering to other saints, at the end of the day, in our inner nature we are simple sheep who need a Pastor to lead and care for us!

As we said, being an Apostle, a Prophet, an Evangelist, whatever, is no excuse for us to "escape" the rule of the simple disciple/servant who is a sheep like all the other sheep of God...Even though I may work in the capacity of an Apostle, I am still a simple SHEEP that is created by God to be in need of a flock and a Pastor!

God gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, for the equipping of the saints! I am ALSO a saint in NEED to be equipped! Even though I may be doing the work of an Apostle, I am neither perfect, nor, do I know it all! If I say that because I do the work of the ministry I have no more need to be equipped or grow more, it means that I have already reached perfection!

But the truth is that none of us has reached perfection; none of us has received the fullness of Christ! We need to continue growing; we need to be equipped with more, greater, deeper things of God. I have met great ministers of the Gospel of Jesus in my life, who operate wonderfully under the power of the Anointing. However, when you socialize with them privately, the imperfections, inner problems, need for growth, are evident... (I am sure many have noticed my own weaknesses and imperfections – I am still on a growth process, too!).

God may be using His servants with great power because He is a Good God, but that does not help the servant be healed or automatically grow to maturity, if the servant is left without someone to help, lead, give advice, speak into personal life issues, help fix errors, assist in solving problems, etc. A leader who does not have another elder-leader to lead the way can end up lost in solitude and is in danger of suffering a very slow growth process, perhaps even worse, spiritual stagnation.

A leader who does not know how to be a submissive disciple under another leader may never grow to the maximum potential in which God could use him/her. In fact, I believe that no one can be a good leader unless they know how to be a good follower, which brings to effect the principle of sowing and reaping.

Is it possible (?) that if all the great ministers of the Gospel who have fallen, had maintained the simplicity of the disciple who submits to the higher authority of an elder-leader, might have been spared of the tragedy of failure?

My wife and I are Pastors of our own Church; we do an apostolic work in the nations equipping the saints of the Most High God, serving in every capacity needed... yet, we are still sheep that need to know where they belong and who leads and cares for them...we still need someone with greater wisdom to speak into our lives and give us advice... we still need someone whose life of faith can be an example for us to follow... we still need to prove through submission to higher authority that humility of Christ in us is stronger than human nature of pride and independence... no one can prove that they are dependent on the authority that comes from God, if they are practically independent in life and ministry!

Independence is at the root of pride and rebellion against authority; independence can only be defeated by practical submission to higher authority. All authority comes from God (Rom.13:1) and if there is no authority over us, then.. there is no authority... that is a form of lawlessness...

The Scriptures speak to us about people who "rule over", or better translated: who are elder-leaders. Let us read:

Hebr. 13:7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of [*their*] conduct.

Hebr. 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

In the original text, the Hellenic word for "rule over" is 'IGOUMENOS' (leader) from the verb 'AGO' (to lead). Shepherds lead the sheep, hence the use of the word "pastor" for those who lead ministries and spiritual families of God.

I have not found any Scriptures that exclude any of the sheep of God from the above principles; I have not found any argument that can explain why and how those who work for the Lord should not have elder- leaders leading the way, or, in simple terms, Pastors appointed by God to watch out for their souls.

Each one of us needs to be properly established under God-given authority, being firmly positioned in the broader Army of God, knowing who our fellow soldiers are, and what authority we submit to. That is a pre-requisite for a person to come into the fullness of God's plan for his/her life.

Coming under the (earthly) ministry of the 5-fold manifestation of Christ (Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher) by commitment and covenant relationship is practically how we are being positioned by God in His earthly Body, which is His Army against the powers of darkness. That is how the people of Israel marched, in their ranks, as they followed the move of the Presence of God in order to enter into their Promise Land.

Exod.13:18 So God led the people around [*by*] way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

It is an important thing for the people of God to know how to keep their ranks!

1 Chron. 12:33 of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks;

Knowing how to keep the ranks is a prerequisite for the brothers of Jesus to become effective warriors of the Kingdom of God on earth, as we follow our Lord, who is the Captain of the Host of heaven.

Joel 2:7 They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like men of war; Every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks.

Keeping the ranks practically means following a leader who has authority over you! And that can only come when we maintain the simplicity of our inner nature as simple disciples of Christ, putting aside all self-perceptions on the basis of our ministry positions that elevate us to a pedestal, where we have become our own authority, and act as if we are beyond correction, having reached perfection.

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